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ABSTRACT

On March 11 and 12, 1976, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (CAPT), a project of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), cohosted a Minimal Competency Measurement Conference in Denver, Colorado. Representatives of 32 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico attended. The conference provided a forum to discuss minimal competency in its broadest sense. The scope of the meetings was loosely defined in order to maximize participant output. Hosts and participants alike were asked to share their thinking on a variety of complex issues that relate to minimal competency. Presented here is a brief summary of the conference proceedings--the topics that were discussed, the information that was shared, and the questions that were raised. (Author/RC)

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ED127376

SUMMARY REPORT
of
MINIMAL COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT CONFERENCE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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MINIMAL COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT CONFERENCE
March 11-12, 1976
Hilton Hotel - Denver, Colorado

I. INTRODUCTION

On March 11 and 12, 1976, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (CAPT), a project of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), co-hosted a Minimal Competency Measurement Conference in Denver, Colorado.[1] Although the conference was put together on short notice, representatives of thirty-two states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico attended. A roster of participants is included in Appendix B.

The conference provided a forum to discuss minimal competency in its broadest sense. Having grown out of ideas generated only one month before, the scope of the meetings was loosely defined in order to maximize participant input. Hosts and participants alike were asked to share their thinking on a variety of complex issues that relate to minimal competency. What follows is a brief summary of the conference proceedings -- the topics that were discussed, the information that was shared, and the questions that were raised.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF MINIMAL COMPETENCY LEGISLATION

Chris Pipho, Associate Department Director, Research and Information Services/ECS, led the discussions reviewing existing and proposed state policies and legislation dealing with minimal competency. Appendix C

[1]Appendix A provides background information on the ECS/NAEP and NWREL/CAPT.

provides some reviews of state and local level requirements for graduation that are presently mandated or under consideration. In-depth reviews of three programs were presented and are summarized below.

California

Dale Carlson of the California State Department of Education provided a review of the legislation in California since 1972.

1) S.B. 1112, 1972 -- Students may request verification according to criteria established by the State Department of Education of their basic skills. Meeting this standard enables the student to enter Community Colleges in California, but is not equivalent of a high school diploma. To limit enrollment of non-high school graduates, only one percent of the enrollment at any Community College can be filled by this method.

2) S.B. 52, 1973 -- The certificate of proficiency in basic skills becomes equivalent to a high school diploma

3) S.B. 470, 1975 -- The limitations on enrollments of students with certificates of proficiency are lifted.

4) S.B. 1502 -- Presently under consideration provides some administration changes making the program more uniform by establishing the age requirement at 17-year-old or older or second semester sophomore standing.

5) New legislation (RISE) pertaining to more personalized and flexible learning programs has strong implications for statewide minimal standards for high school graduation.

Oregon

Clark Smith reviewed recent State Board of Education rulings.

1) In 1972-73 there was a legislative effort to mandate minimal competency for schooling. However, the bill died when new graduation requirements were developed by the board.

2) Last year the State Board moved closer to competency based graduation requirements. A minimal standard for graduation from high school includes:

    a) passing various required courses at the secondary level.

    b) meeting attendance requirements.

c) meeting a set of competencies considered relevant to life roles which include the individual as learner, consumer, producer, family member, citizen and life long learner. Each district presently determines those competencies for themselves.

More detailed information on the programs in Oregon can be obtained from the Oregon State Department of Education by writing to the Documents Clerk, State Department of Education, Salem, Oregon 97310 for "Elementary and Secondary Education for Oregon Schools."

Denver, Colorado

Jerry Cavanaugh of the Denver Public Schools discussed a local district approach that he feels has been quite successful. The "Proficiency and Review Program" as it is called has been used for fifteen years as part of the graduation requirement of the schools. It basically consists of four tests of numerical skills, spelling, language and reading in which students must demonstrate proficiency in order to graduate from high school. The tests have undergone periodic revision with input both from the community and teachers. Based on the Denver experience, Cavanaugh made the following suggestions to those considering a similar program.

1) The first year program should be primarily experimental in nature.

2) If the program is designed for twelfth graders, it should be administered early in the twelfth grade so that it can be readministered later in the year again to give students at least two chances to meet the requirement.

3) The Board of Education and school administration must be prepared to fund refresher courses in the areas needed.

4) The nature of the test must be clearly understood by teachers and counselors at all levels of the school system.

5) The nature of the test must be understood by parents and community groups.

6) If the tests are administered before the twelfth grade, refresher courses must be available and retesting must follow these courses.

House and Senate bills introduced in the 1975 Colorado legislative session has led to some modifications in these proficiency testing programs. Some salient points of the program as it now exists include:

1) the test must be administered beginning at grade 9.

2) there are twice-a-year testings in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

3) parents must be notified of failing scores.

4) tutorial classes must be offered to students failing any part of the test.

5) results of the test must be used in curriculum revision in the district.

6) once the test is passed, it is unnecessary to take it again.

7) the minimal standard for passing the test is answering thirty-two out of fifty questions correctly.

The three presentations and the review of legislation all pointed to the fact that the majority of states do have strong interest in establishing some minimal standards for schooling. Among areas of concern that continually were raised in question-and-answer sessions were:

1) Do minimal competency or equivalency tests apply only to students?

2) What kinds of students take tests that give them equivalency diplomas?

3) How well are equivalency diplomas accepted in the community at large?

4) Do certain districts receive supplemental support -- financial or otherwise?

While the approaches are quite different and at various stages in their development, there remains a clear and persistent need to share experiences and develop new procedures.

III. CREATING AND MAINTAINING A LARGE ITEM BANK

The issue of minimal competency ultimately becomes a testing and measurement problem. The responsibility to insure appropriate measures is an awesome one for which no one has all the answers. In light of this, Hal Wilson, Director of Exercise Development at National Assessment, prepared some suggestions for the conference on how state and local school districts might begin to approach the problems constructively by using an item bank approach to generate test items. The major aspects of his proposal were:

1) The creation of a very large pool of test items -- perhaps upwards of 10,000 items -- that could in some sense define the domain of minimal competency.

2) Use the domain of items to establish a body of materials from which state and local districts could sample or select items which met their particular needs at a given time.

In order to deal with questions and potential problems raised by the item bank proposal, three sessions were set up for the afternoon to address specific issues.

Group 1 was charged with discussing whether or not enough agreement about what minimal competency was could be reached to make the notion of a large item pool seem feasible.

Group 2 was asked to take up the issues of item characteristics and criterion.

Group 3 addressed the issues of item security, legal restrictions and copyright problems.

Each group was asked to meet for one and one-half hours to discuss the issues, and was asked to report back to the conference later in the day.

A fourth group was extemporaneously put together to address policy concerns on the suggestion of one of the participants.

Summary of Small Group Discussions

Group 1. Table of Specifications (Objectives)
Dick Hulsart, NAEP Area Development Coordinator, Chairman

Two models of tables of specifications (matrices), the National Assessment model and the California model, were presented to the group for consideration (see Appendix D), and discussed at great length. Both matrix models are similar in that they present a two-dimensional scheme. The consensus of opinion was that while the two-dimensional model had its weaknesses, going beyond it would be a very expensive and time consuming effort. Although no one really had a good handle on how the model could be improved, one three-dimensional model was presented. The group felt that the NAEP and California models were possibly useful to state and local groups, and that NAEP logically should take the leadership in this area because of the long term expertise. A number of important general questions were raised by the group at this session. These included:

1) How will or do students benefit from minimal competency tests?

2) If the tests are intended to discover deficiencies, why not give them at very early ages. Is the last year of high school the time to find out that students are not minimally competent or functionally literate?

3) Are there ways other than testing to demonstrate competency? (i.e., demonstrating ability to perform artificial respiration, change a tire, help someone in the community, etc.) Is it feasible to ask for demonstrations of competency other than on a paper/pencil test?

Group 2. Item Characteristics and Criterion
Hal Wilson, NAEP Director of Exercise Development, Chairman

Item characteristics were defined as information needed to successfully use those items. For example, if there were a national item bank for minimal competency, information about such things as validity, reliability, judgments of appropriateness, standard errors, correct and incorrect responses would be necessary. It was concluded that the data one needed about a given item is dependent upon the use the item would have (except that there should be evidence that all items contribute to the measurement of a given objective). Three basic uses of minimal competency tests were delineated by the group.

1) To establish a national standard to tell whether young people can function in our society.

2) To report competencies to decision makers at all levels by located strengths and weaknesses of particular school systems and drawing comparisons between state results and particular districts, between states and the nation as a whole, between districts of similar socio-economic status, etc.

3) To make changes in school systems based on the data.

Discussions of these various uses pointed out the dichotomy between the need for national standards and the tradition of local control. Two main ideas were agreed upon.

1) In order to have a national item bank, some kind of national level data is necessary.

2) It would be desirable to have consensus from a national group on the content validity of the measures that were chosen.

Group 3. Item Security
Jim Gold, Director of Assessment of the Wisconsin State Department of Education, Chairman

The discussion was limited by the breadth of possibilities that needed to be discussed. The question of the level of security is dependent upon the use of the materials and the scale of the program. In some cases, very

strict security would be called for, while in others it would not be necessary. The group discussed the following security questions.

1) How large would an item bank have to be before random selection would provide adequate security?

2) What security would be needed for tests that provided high school equivalencies or diplomas?

3) What was the feasibility of a release policy something like NAEP's?

4) What were the possibilities of two item pools -- one that was secure and one that was not?

Group 4. Other Topics
Blaine Worthen, NWREL/CAPT Reporter

The group discussed a variety of policy issues and raised a number of important philosophical issues. Some of the questions raised included:

1) Do minimal competencies put unrealistic pressures on children? Are there inequities in terms of social groups, income groups, ethnic groups, etc. that need to be addressed?

2) How can key individuals in states with no minimal competency mandates be involved in decision-making processes on a national level? Can these individuals be identified?

3) What should be the linkage between minimal competency and the curriculum? How can they be reflected in the curriculum?

4) What mechanism will insure that the information shared at this conference will not be lost when it ends?

5) Is the minimal competency movement an outgrowth of the increased cost of education?

6) Will the minimal competency movement over-emphasize low levels of achievement at the expense of some students?

7) What other aspects of the educational enterprise need to be measured aside from student minimal competency?

8) How should parents be involved in this process?

In the late afternoon, small groups with special interests met to discuss their concerns. A summary of the meeting agenda follows.

Summary of Special Interest Group Agendas

Group 1. Joe Nathan, Chairman

Methods of developing competency-based requirements that could be measured by student performance in activities rather than by paper-and-pencil tests. Examples of requirements in Alaska, Minnesota and Iowa will serve as models. Some individual schools using competency based measures include: Craig Alternative School - Craig, Alaska; Central Catholic High School - Denver, Colorado; Metro High School - Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Alternative Learning Project - Providence, Rhode Island; S.E. Free School - Minneapolis, Minnesota; St. Paul Open School - St. Paul, Minnesota.

Group 2. Gordon Asher, Chairman

Problems of development and use of minimal competency exams at the national, state and local levels. What expectations do national, state and local leaders have? What needs -- perceived or real? What should their roles be in development?

Group 3. Dick Stiles, Chairman

What is it like in the trenches? A discussion of what is going on in the development of graduation competencies in the state of Oregon.

Group 4. Hugh Harlan, Chairman

Topics for discussion include: 1) the role of item banks beyond minimal competency; 2) identification and measurement of basic learner outcomes for career education; 3) California high school proficiency exams; 4) Nebaska's experience in developing measures of essential learning skills and testing procedures.

Group 5. Blaine Worthen, Chairman

Continuation of the discussions held by the group interest in policy-relevant issues.

IV. THE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR APPLIED PERFORMANCE TESTING

The Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (CAPT) has been and is perceived as a functioning agency that can be of great utility in the collection and dissemination of testing materials and policy issues related to the measurement of minimal competencies. As such, CAPT can continue to fill a void until the item bank concept becomes a reality. One of the goals of NWREL/CAPT as co-host of the conference was to take a reading of the needs of states involved in the whole minimal competency movement and to see whether or not CAPT could continue to perform a valuable service as a clearinghouse for materials and ideas. A number of CAPT users explained the services CAPT has provided, their utility, and how these might be useful for others. The Clearinghouse representatives from the CAPT Policy Board portrayed as an important retrieval mechanism for state and local school districts needing information and materials about assessing real life competencies within the scope of the public school curriculum. Three general questions were suggested for each small group discussion.

1) Are current CAPT activities appropriate for supporting minimal competency testing in your state or school district? If not, could you suggest ways CAPT should be focused to make its activities more appropriate to the needs of your state or district?

2) Are there activities which should be added to or deleted from CAPT to make it more useful?

3) Are you aware of materials or instruments that CAPT does not have in its present collection but that CAPT should obtain?

Summary of Group Discussions

Group 1. Dale Carlson, California State Department of Education - Reporter

The consensus of opinion about the first question was that it was still too early to tell. Three main reasons were given:

1) Some people have not heard enough about CAPT, seen enough of its materials or experienced its services to make any judgments.

2) Education has newly discovered this testing technique and, therefore, has not closely scrutinized this type of measurement.

3) CAPT appears ahead of its time in terms of supplying a need which is just now beginning to mount significantly in education.

A regional component was suggested as a way that CAPT might become more appropriate to state and local needs. Some people suggested CAPT's role ought to expand to include more emphasis on policy implications. For example, it was felt further discussion of questions such as "How does one cope with government agencies?", "How does one advise legislatures?", "How we go from identifying minimal competency, to gathering information about present levels, to implementing programs to change and improve the present system?"

The group made two tentative suggestions:

1) That question number one be posed to the group at a later time because it became apparent that it was premature. Some people have not seen or used the materials put out by CAPT; so they suggested that materials be sent to them by CAPT with a reaction sheet. Each person could review the material and respond with his/her point of view as to whether or not the material is useful and indicate whether there is a need to continue along these lines.

2) To emphasize the component of CAPT which addresses the conceptual policy and the arrangement and process issues more. That component is there; but is not emphasized sufficiently in the present CAPT operations.

Group 2. Kenneth Loewe, Florida State Department of Education - Reporter

The group found it difficult to respond directly to question number two as it was posed, since so many potential things could be done based on CAPT activities and services. Some suggestions included:

1) Using the CAPT bibliography to establish a common language of minimal competency.

2) Using CAPT as a vehicle to collect items and develop a test booklet.

3) Expanding the role of CAPT in working closely with local school districts.

4) Using CAPT as a focal point to collect information and develop concerns about minimal competency objectives, measures and programs nationwide.

5) Using CAPT to generate position papers on the philosophical issues surrounding minimal competency testing.

Group 3. Bob Keysor, Brigham Young University - Reporter

The group tended to address global issues, raised by question number three, generally endorsing the idea of an agency that would develop, collect and disseminate materials for people involved in minimal competency testing. They felt the mechanics might be streamlined even more but strongly supported the idea and felt it should be kept alive.

V. CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

One of the main goals of the conference was to get feedback on the concept of creating and maintaining a large item bank. Among the questions raised were: Is the concept feasible? Is it useful? What are the potentials? Although a variety of problems were addressed, the consensus of opinion of those attending the conference seemed to be that the development of a large item bank was possible and advisable. The reservations

that were voiced were basically philosophical. Some concern was expressed that the implications of the whole minimal competency movement needed to be addressed more directly. A sampling of the broad range of questions that were raised include:

1) How can the main areas of minimal competency be identified?

2) How can the formation of an item bank be initiated? Who would begin it?

3) Why are we considering the issue in the first place?

4) Have the philosophical and political issues been dealt with in sufficient detail?

5) Do states have the luxury of waiting too long for some action?

6) How can the great variability in need from state to state be taken into account?

Representatives of several states, among them California, New Jersey and Maryland, suggested there was a present need for an item bank which they would find very useful right now. While they all expressed awareness of these philosophical and political dangers involved in rushing ahead, they also felt realities dictated that some hard thinking on the issue begin immediately. The consensus of opinion was that the technical problems were not insurmountable, but that state support was mandatory if the concept was to succeed. The large representation at the conference on such short notice (over thirty states) indicated that a great interest in the subject does exist. The problem seemed to be how to harness the interest, combine the efforts, and get the ball rolling in the right direction. The participants felt that some more meetings were necessary, perhaps with more extensive representation at the local level as well, and that communication should continue on other fronts as well. NAEP and CAPT seemed to be very useful vehicles for bringing the whole thing together. Their

roles were shown to be supplemental and supportive of each other. In developing a national minimal competency network, NAEP's primary role would be to use its expertise in the development of a large item bank. CAPT on the other hand would maintain its clearinghouse functions; i.e., the collection of materials and the development of position papers and reference materials. Together these two organizations could provide minimal competency services on a nationwide scale, and provide for the variety of needs that the conference indicated were necessary.

APPENDIX A

The Background of the Conference

Letter of Invitation
and
Conference Agenda

Education Commission of the States
300 LINCOLN TOWER • 1860 LINCOLN STREET
(303) 893-5200 • DENVER, COLORADO 80203

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the upcoming meeting of educational agencies interested in developing and using competency based measures of life skills. I appreciate your interest, and wish to give you more information about what we hope to accomplish in the March meeting.

The conference on Minimal Competency Measurement to be held in Denver on March 11 and 12 will be hosted by the Education Commission of the States (ECS). The conference is under the joint sponsorship of ECS and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL).

Let me briefly outline the background of the conference. Over the past few years, state and local education agencies have become increasingly dissatisfied with existing achievement tests; such tests did not seem to adequately measure basic life skills. Inadequacies of available achievement tests for that purpose have been highlighted by increasing state legislation calling for measurement of minimal competencies and often relating such measurement to awarding high school diplomas. As legislators and other policy makers began to demand more information on how well schools were preparing students to function in society, many state and local education agencies began turning to competency based testing as a way to measure basic life skills. Unfortunately, very few competency based instruments or items were available for their use.

In response to the need for competency based measures, some states began developing their own tests. California is particularly well known for its success in this area. Also, two national projects of the sponsoring agencies have provided assistance to states and local districts in obtaining and using measures of life skills.

One project is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), sponsored by ECS, and funded by the National Center for Education Statistics. For several years, NAEP has been a major force throughout

the United States for measuring educational outcomes in various content areas. NAEP has become well known for its capabilities in developing educational objectives and associated test items. As part of its work, NAEP has developed competency based measures which have been adapted by state and local educational agencies for use in mass-testing situations. NAEP items formed a basis for many tests later used by individual states.

The second project, the Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (CAPT), is a project of NWREL and is funded by the U.S. Office of Education. CAPT was established to promote and support the use of applied performance testing by educational agencies. A primary function of CAPT has been to collect and disseminate materials related to the measurement of life skills. CAPT is sponsored by the states of Hawaii, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington through an ESEA Title V grant. However, its focus during the past two years has become nationwide; over 2,500 institutions and agencies throughout the United States have received services and competency based tests and testing materials from CAPT.

Both sponsoring agencies (ECS and NWREL) are broadly involved in activities relevant to this conference. ECS is directly involved in measurement instrument development through the NAEP project, and in addition furnishes to its member states an important service in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of legislation and the development of model legislation. One of the primary responsibilities of ECS is to provide a forum to focus and coordinate the efforts of state legislators, educational practioners and researchers on common educational problems. The rapid increase of existing and pending state legislation concerning minimal competency and high school proficiency examinations indicates a need for sharing the intent and exact nature of such legislation as well as the state of the art available for responsible implementation of such legislative mandates.

In addition to CAPT, a major program of NWREL is the Oregon Competencies Program which is focused on developing measures and materials to support Oregon's legislative mandate that high school graduation, teacher certification and school accreditation all be competency based.

The purpose of the March meeting is two fold -- first, to provide a forum for sharing problems and information in the area of minimal competency measurement and second, to examine and discuss ways in which the cooperative efforts of ECS and NWREL can be of maximum utility to states and local districts in facing the problems of minimal competency measurement. The response to the telephone invitation has been extremely encouraging. As of today, the following state and local districts and universities have indicated at least tentative plans to attend: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin; Baltimore, Maryland; Polk County, Georgia; and New York State University.

A tentative agenda is enclosed for your review. Additional discussion topics are solicited and encouraged from conference participants. A revised agenda will be mailed to all participants on March 1 along with perhaps one or two discussion papers.

The conference will be held at the Denver Hilton Hotel beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 11, and continuing through Friday afternoon, March 12. A registration form is enclosed. You will note that there is no registration fee, but participants are responsible for their own travel and lodging expense. The registration form must be returned by March 1 to assure access to the reduced room rate.

On behalf of ECS and NWREL, we extend this formal invitation to attend the Minimal Competency Measurement Conference. We look forward to seeing you in March and would be pleased to respond to any questions that you might have prior to the meeting. In the event you are unable to attend this conference, we would greatly appreciate your writing a formal statement of support for the conference and its implied future activities. Please address the statement to me at the address shown on the letterhead.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

H. A. Wilson, Director
Exercise Development

HAW:jke

Encls.

AGENDA

MINIMAL COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT CONFERENCE
ECS/NAEP - NWREL/CAPT
Denver Hilton Hotel
Denver, Colorado

Thursday - March 11

9:00 Welcome -- Denver Room
Roy Forbes, Director of NAEP

9:10 Review of existing and proposed state policies and legislation dealing with minimal competency
Chris Pipho, Associate Department Director, Research and Information Services, ECS

10:30 Coffee Break

10:45 Discussion of the feasibility of creating and maintaining a large item bank
Hal Wilson, Director of Exercise Development, NAEP

12:00 Lunch

1:30 Small group discussions of large item bank:

Group 1: Table of specifications (objectives) -- Century Room
Dick Hulsart, Chairman
Kenneth Seaman, Reporter
Richard Knight, Recorder

Group 2: Item characteristics (criterion groups) -- Spruce Room
Hal Wilson, Chairman
Nancy Burton, Reporter
Barbara Deard, Recorder

Group 3: Item security (state and local contributions) -- Gold Room
Jim Gold, Chairman
Chris Pipho, Reporter
Barbara Ward, Recorder

3:00 Coffee Break

3:30 Reports of discussion groups to the full conference -- Denver Room

4:30 Special interest groups:

Session A: Open School Competency Based Graduation Requirements -- Denver Room
Joe Nathan, St. Paul Open School
Session B: To be announced -- Spruce Room
Session C: To be announced -- Gold Room
Session D: To be announced -- Century Room

Friday -- March 12

9:00 Introduction to CAPT --Denver Room
Blaine Worthen, Director of Division of Evaulation, Research and Computer Technology, NWREL

Overview of past activities and products
Dean Nafziger, Director of CAPT

CAPT Utilization and Dissemination
Thomas Sachse, Assessment Specialist, CAPT

CAPT Perspective of the project administrator
Ronald Johnson, Policy Board, CAPT -- Hawaii Department of Education

Uses of CAPT materials in competency based education
James Impara, Policy Board, CAPT -- Oregon Department of Education

State benefits received from CAPT
Gordon Ensign, Policy Board, CAPT -- Washington,Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Development of instructional materials
Irvin Edgar, Policy Board, CAPT -- Pennsylvania Department of Education

10:30 Coffee Break

10:45 Small group discussions of needs of states and future directions

Group 1:	Blain Worthen, Chairman Ronald Johnson, Co-Chairman	Spruce Room
Group 2:	Dean Nafziger, Chairman Irvin Edgar, Co-Chairman	Century Room
Group 3:	Thomas Sachse, Chairman Gordon Ensign, Co-Chairman	Gold Room

11:30 Summary of the small group discussions -- Denver Room

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Conference wrap up -- where do we go from here

3:00 Adjourn

APPENDIX B

Roster of Conference Participants

ROSTER OF ATTENDEES (BY STATE)
MINIMAL COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT CONFERENCE
MARCH 11-12, 1976 -- DENVER, COLORADO

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APPENDIX C

Minimal Student Achievement Levels for Graduation
A Quick Review of a Complex Subject

and

Update: Minimal Competency Testing

MINIMUM STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS FOR GRADUATION

A Quick Review of A Very Complex Subject

THE PROBLEM

Per pupil cost of education have doubled in the past decade or so. Programs are much more comprehensive. The 15 year period from 1959 saw an impressive amount of innovation. At least by standard credentials, teachers are better trained. Well over 80% of our young people graduate from a high school - highest in the world.

But all signs unmistakably point to poorer performance. Both major college testing programs report long-term downward trends in college aptitude of high school graduates. The National Assessment of Educational Progress objective-referenced exercises have shown that achievement in both science and writing have declined in the last five years. The Adult Performance Level (APL) evaluation, conducted by the University of Texas, indicates that one adult in five lacks the basic know how to cope effectively in a complex society. Colleges report the need for an increasing number of remedial courses in the first two years.

By perhaps the most significent performance test - ability of high school graduates to do jobs in business - performance is down substantially. A recent survey by the writer of five varied major industrial establishments confirmed declining performance of high school graduates on the job. The professional people who hire and evaluate young people confirm that press reports generally understate this decline.

There are lots of reasons for declining performance - the desire to enhance student self image, social promotion, 18,000 hours of TV per child, less or no family reinforcement of performance standards and, last but not least, the schools displacing instruction to absorb tasks traditionally the responsibility of the home and church. But, the public is tired of excuses. The plain fact is that to the post high school institutions and to the employers, high school graduation - a diploma - no longer guarantees even minimum competence in basic skills. The General Educational Development Test (GED) is becoming more highly regarded than the diploma by some business people - at least minimum competencies must be demonstrated for its award.

WHAT'S GOING ON - STATE LEVEL

The states, with the primary responsibility for education in our Federal system, all have minimum state-mandated graduation requirements. Usually expressed as Carnegie units (96 to 130 clock hours of prepared classroom work), "successful completion" of a four-year total of 15 - 20 units are required in all but six states. Required credits in English, Math, Science, American History, Social Studies and Physical/Health Education vary from none in three states to 13 by the most prescribed standards of one state. A typical pattern is 3-4 English units, 1 Math, 1 Science, 1 American History, 1-2 Social Studies and 1-4 Physical/Health Education plus 3-10 electives.

Minimum class attendance is usually not specified. Until recently, no specific competencies were required for graduation from high school.

In the past five years, there has been a significant move toward broadening the basis for high school graduation. Aimed primarily at the well motivated and academically talented, these allow some credit for approved 8th grade plus post-secondary or correspondence courses, school and community-related activities, supervised work experience, and the like. In some cases, a diploma can be awarded on successful completion of a year of college work after early admission. Experimental "external degree" programs are being evaluated. Credit can also be earned by passing a proficiency test without a formal course. These programs are in addition to the increasingly-used GED test. Special consideration is also being given to recognizing achievement of handicapped students who meet prescribed standards possible for them. But the facts are that very few students have or will avail themselves of these desirable liberalizations. Although most states have are or moving toward liberalizing graduation requirements, known changes include Maryland (71), New Jersey (73), New York (73), Louisiana and Delaware.

In the last 2-3 years, some states have begun to move toward minimum required competencies for graduation. Of course New York has for a long time had its optional Regents diploma which requires certain achievement in specified subjects. However, only a small fraction of state students seek or qualify for this degree. For the class of 1976, Arizona will require for graduation a demonstrated ability to read at the ninth-grade level.

The Oregon mandated graduation requirements were adopted by the State Board of Education in 1972 and local districts filed implementation plans by July 1974, after a major reassessment of their education programs. The new requirements pertain for students starting 9th grade in Sept. 1974 and graduating in 1978. The new requirements are based on credits for courses, attendance and development of specified competencies. Twenty-one credits are required including 3 in communication skills, 1 math, 1 social science, 1 citizenship, 1 laboratory science, 1 health, 1 personal finance, 1 career education and 10 electives. These credits may be granted for education outside normal schooling or may be gained by examination. Required competencies include demonstrated ability to:

Personal Development - Read, analyze, speak, write, compute, understand basic science and technology plus developing a healthy mind and body and the role of a life-long learner.

Social Responsibility - Function effectively as a citizen in community, state and nation; in interaction with ones environment; on streets and highways; and as a consumer.

Career Development - Function effectively within a career cluster or range of occupations.

No statewide tests are planned; each district develops performance indicators it is willing to accept.

In September 1975, California's Supt. Wilson Riles announced a state certificate of proficiency which can be obtained by passing a four-hour, 200 item test of basic skills in reading, writing and computation. The legislature is being asked to require that every student achieve a certain level of competency, together with a marketable skill, to get a diploma. Only 2% of the eligible 16 - 17 year olds took the first test in December 1975 and of those only 45% passed. Many local districts in the state, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacremento, San Jose, Norwalk-Miranda starting in 1972, and Whittier-Union, are working actively on some type of competency graduation standards.

Virginia education officals are considering competency requirements for a high school diploma beginning with the class of 1979. Contemplated requirements would cover functional literacy, computational skills, a basic knowledge of U.S. history and culture and the ability to enter a post-secondary school or attainment of a job skill that makes immediate employment possible.

Florida's Supt. Turlington proposed in November an optional diploma that would certify minimum competency in the basic skills. A student could get a diploma without passing the test, but would receive special recognition for passing it. Representative Conway will introduce legislation requiring three types of diplomas in each district-general, vocational development and a certificate of attendance. The first two require demonstrated, state-mandated competencies. Each student who graduates or leaves school will receive a certificate indicating his specific level of competency in at least reading, writing, speaking and math (as Conant recommended in 1959 and now incorporated into the GED but not the diploma).

The Louisiana State Board of Education has requested Dept. of Education recommendations on possible required competencies for a high school diploma. Pennsylvania's proposed new school code, introduced in the legislature in February 1976, will require testing in basic competencies and the recording of results in student's files before graduation but only four years after passage. Georgia's State Board now requires that to be rated as standard, a school must either demonstrate that its students achieve at or above the state average in basic skills or progress toward this goal. Many other states, not here listed, are also studying or moving toward adoption of minimum standards for graduation including demonstrated competencies.

THE LOCAL LEVEL

In addition to the Oregon and California school districts noted earlier, there is much happening. Denver has had a competency requirement for several years. Gary, Indiana has approved a requirement to take effect with the class of 1977. Greenville County, Virginia and Duval County, Florida have adopted minimum graduation standards. Clark County, Nevada (Las Vegas) is reported to be studying award of special diplomas indicating student academic excellence. The number of local districts working in this area number at least in the hundreds but information is not yet generally available through compilations such as ERIC.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Work on minimum graduation standards is going on among many concerned professional education and curriculum groups. But the most widely known is the Task Force report on Graduation Requirements of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The task force believes that qualification for high school diplomas should include verification by both course and competency.

Proposed competency measures include:

a. Functional literacy in reading, writing and speaking
b. Ability to compute, including decimals and percentages
c. Knowledge of the history and culture of the United States, including concepts and processes of democratic governance

CONCLUSIONS

The sorry state of student achievement in general and the real downgrading of the high school diploma as a measure of competence require prompt action by state and local education boards, administrators, professional organizations and citizens interested in public education. The current situation indicates that Gresham's Law of Economics holds also for a high school education. As paraphrased: A few high school graduates without basic competencies will soon drive out (downgrade) the community's perception of all high school graduates.

What are you doing about it?

UPDATE: MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING

* State Legislation
* State Board of Education Rulings
* State Department of Education Activity
* Local District Programs

Prepared By The
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Research and Information Services Department

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April 15, 1976

INTRODUCTION

The surge of state interest in minimal competency testing seems to be indicative of the general public concern over the quality of education students are receiving in elementary and secondary schools.

While the term "minimal competency" has not yet achieved universal acceptance, it is being used to describe events such as basic skills, survival skills, life skills, etc.

Essentially, states are taking one of two approaches to the issue:

* Early High School Graduation: The California and Florida legislation passed last year is designed to use a minimal competency test to create an alternative route through high school. While many other states are interested in the test of minimal competency, not many appear willing to allow students to leave high school at the end of one or two years.

* Minimum Proficiency for the Regular High School Diploma: Most current interest in minimal competency seems to center on adding this kind of test as a prerequisite or high school graduation. Some states have also moved the minimal proficiency idea down to the end of sixth and ninth grade. There appears to also be some interest in expanding this concept into grade to grade promotion.

While the terminology and thrusts of each state differ, the overall emphasis appears to be on a better definition of minimal or basic skills and some form of test (often statewide) to measure how well these minimal skills are being attained by all students.

STATUS OF MINIMAL COMPETENCY TESTING
AT THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS

* Legislation enacted and pending

* State Board Rulings

* Local District Activity

April 15, 1976

I. Legislation Enacted

California - SB 1112 Passed in 1972 and SB 1243 passed in 1975. The two acts combined create the California High School Proficiency Test. Sixteen and seventeen year-olds, upon successful completion of the test are awarded a proficiency certificate legally equivalent to high school diploma. They may leave high school if they pass the test and receive parent permission. The test covers the process areas of reading and computation and the content areas of consumer economics and mathematics.

Colorado - SB 180 Colorado revised Statutes 22-32-109.5. Enacted 1975. Provisions of the Act: If a local board of education imposes any special proficiency test for graduation from the twelfth grade beyond the regular requirements for satisfactory completion of the courses and hours prescribed for graduation, the results of such tests shall be used by school districts to design regular or special classes to meet the needs of all children as indicated by overall test results. If a board determines to impose such a proficiency test, such test shall be given at least twice during each school year and initial testing shall take place in the ninth grade.

Any child who does not satisfactorily fulfill the requirements of a special proficiency test imposed under the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be provided with remedial or tutorial services during the school day in the subject area in which the test indicates deficiencies for graduation purposes. Such child shall be provided with these services from the time of the initial testing until such time as the results of the special proficiency test are satisfactory. Parents of children not satisfactorily fulfilling the requirements of a special proficiency test shall be provided with all special proficiency test scores for their child a minimum of once each semester.

Florida - CSSB 340 - Sec. 229.85. Enacted 1975
Lowers age of compulsory school attendance from 16 to 14 years. The Act provides that any student who is at least 16 years old may be permitted to take a high school equivalency diploma examination; and that students who are at least 14 and have the approval of a parent or guardian, may be permitted to take the examination. Any student who attains satisfactory performance on the examination shall be awarded a high school equivalency diploma and shall be exempted from the compulsory school attendance requirements.

It also requires the state board of education to establish performance standards and provide for comprehensive examinations to be administered to candidates. The department of education is authorized to award high school equivalency diplomas to successful candidates and each district school board is required to offer and administer the examinations.

Virginia - HB 256 - Standards of Quality Act (Passed in 1976 legislative session. Effective July 1, 1976)
The Constitution of the State of Virginia calls for the state board of education to prescribe standards of quality for the several school divisions subject to revision by the General Assembly. One of the goals of education in Virginia is to aid students, consistent with their abilities, to become competent in the fundamental academic skills.

Each school division is to give highest instructional priority to developing the reading, communications and mathematics skills of all students with particular attention to the primary grades (1-3) and the intermediate grades (4-6). Remedial work for low achieving students shall begin upon identification of student need.

By September of 1978, the state board of education in cooperation with local districts shll establish specific minimum statewide educational objectives and a uniform statewide test in reading, communications and mathematics skills. The test is to measure yearly progress for individual students.

The Act also sets standards in career preparation, special education, gifted and talented students, personnel, teacher preparation, testing and measurement accreditations planning and public involvement and district policy manuals.

Legislation Pending - 1976

Arizona - SB 1138, Pending. Would restrict current state board ruling by not allowing the State Uniform Achievement Evaluation to be used to establish minimum achievement levels.

California - AB 1731, encompassing recommendations made by the RISE (Reform in Intermediate and Secondary Education) Commission. One of the provisions of the bill is a requirement for the testing of minimal competency in basic skills and other areas.

AB 3408. This measure calls for school districts to adopt "alternative means" for students to complete a high school education. Mentioned in the bill are practical demonstrations of skills and competencies, work experience and other outside school experience. Assessment of pupil progress towards proficiency in basic skills is also required.

AB 2559, prohibits the admission or promotion of an elementary grade pupil to any particular grade unless his reading ability is at least equal to that prescribed for pupils in the next lower grade. Ability is to be determined in a manner prescribed by the state board of education.

Florida - HB 2455. Would repeal (CSSB 340 (see Page ___, enacted legislation) in 1975 session.

SB 107 and HB 2659. Would require twelfth grade students to pass functional literacy examination in reading, writing, mathematics as requirement for graduation from high school, sixth graders to pass similar test to leave elementary school. The department of education is to develop the test.

Idaho - SB 1390. This bill would direct the state superintendent of instruction to develop a testing program covering the basic skill areas. The test results are to be reported back to the legislature.

Kansas - SB 406. Would require high school students to take a general examination as a requirement for graduation.

Maryland - SJR 69. Requests the state board of education to require a minimum level of proficiency in basic skill areas as a prerequisite to high school graduation.

HB 1433. This bill would have the state board of education prescribe progressively advanced minimal reading levels for grades 2-12. Promotions from grade to grade would be controlled by this test. This bill has passed both the House and the Senate and now awaits the Governor's veto or signature.

Pennsylvania - HB 770 (Revision of state education codes included in § 3702, Part D:

STUDENT COMPETENCIES. Each school district shall, in accordance with regulations of the state board, develop a system of tests and measurements to evaluate whether or not its students have developed minimal competencies within state mandated programs. To this end, each district shall implement a continuing review of programs to measure student competencies in skills necessary to enter the world of work and to cope with problems encountered by adults. The review shall include but shall not be limited to measuring student ability to: communicate and compute effectively; understand and perform personal finance and consumer tasks including understanding consumer finance, computing interest rates, purchasing insurance, completing personal tax forms, knowing the basis of property and other taxes and comprehending residential leases and purchasing agreements.

Tennessee - HB 2060. High school graduation diploma based on proficiency examination in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in sixth and tenth grades to perform in basic skill areas at fifth and ninth grade levels or enroll in remedial programs.

II. State Board of Education Rulings and State Department of Education Activity as Related to Minimal Competency.

Arizona - Effective January 1, 1976 school districts would be required to have students receiving the standard eight grade certificate to be able to read, write and compute at the sixth grade level. High school students would have to demonstrate an ability to read, write and compute at the ninth grade level.

Georgia - The state board of education has passed a resolution requiring the department of education to prepare and local districts to administer a criterion referenced reading test to fourth grade pupils in the Spring of 1976. The test currently designed to assist districts in identifying students who might need remedial assistance if promoted. The state board is currently studying the issue of cut-off scores and nonpromotion.

It is anticipated that this testing process will assist local districts in better utilizing $10 million in state funds earmarked for the Georgia Compensatory Education Program.

Louisiana - The department of education has requested the state board of education to include a study of minimal competency testing within the development of a state master plan for education.

Maryland - The state board of education is studying the issues related to the creation of a minimum basic proficiency examination for high school graduation. A decision is anticipated prior to the Summer of 1976.

The state department of education has developed the Maryland Basic Mastery Test for reading which is now being administrered in grades 6, 9, and 12. This "Survival Reading Test" (forms b and c, 9th and 12th grade level) is also being administered in the fall of each school year to grades 7 and 11 as a part of the statewide accountability program.

Massachusetts - At present, the Massachusetts Department of Education, in conjunction with educators throughout the state, is beginning to address the issue of requirements for high school graduation and minimum standards. To date, no legislation has been filed or board rulings passed. A preliminary report was presented to the Massachusetts Board of Education on March 24, 1976. Since that time a statewide committee has been established to develop competencies and policy necessary to implement these competencies.

Nebraska - Approval Standards - Elementary and secondary schools are required to establish a minimal performance level in reading, writing and arithmetic. Schools are to re-administer the evaluation instrument until mastery has been demonstrated by all students. The state department of education has an acceptable instrument available if the schools request its use.

New Jersey - The state department of education is in the process of implementing Chapter 212 (originally S 1516) the "thorough and efficient law" dealing with a statewide Supreme Court decision on school finance. Also applicable is the New Jersey Administrative Code: Title 6 Education, Subtitle B, Chapter 8 in particular 6:8-3.8 dealing with the creation and evaluation of remedial programs.

Oregon - The state board mandated new graduation requirements in 1972 with local districts filing implementation plans by July of 1974 for the class of 1978. New requirements are based on credits for courses, attendance and required competencies in personal, social and career areas. Districts are to develop own performance indicators.

III. Local District Activity

1. California - Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, Norwalk-Miranda and Miranda and Whittier-Union, all working on some type of competency graduation standards.

2. Colorado - Denver Public Schools - 15 years of experience with high school graduation competency examination.

3. Florida - Duvall County, Jacksonville, Florida high school seniors will take a one hour test of functional literacy. Will begin with ninth graders in 1976-77 school year.

4. Indiana - Gary, Indiana has a competency diploma requirement to take effect with the class of 1977.

5. Nebraska - Westside Community Schools - District 66, currently are using an outcome evaluation study with some reference to basic skill areas.

6. Nevada - Clarke County, Las Vegas, Nevada is reported to be studying the award of special diplomas indicating student academic excellence.

7. Oregon - Portland, Parkrose School District.

8. Virginia - Greenville, County, Virginia has adopted minimum graduation standards.

APPENDIX D

First Day Small Group Discussion Outlines

Sample Specifications for Minimal Competency Measurement
Item Characteristics - Criterion Groups
Security Concerns

GROUP 1

DISCUSSION OF SAMPLE SPECIFICATIONS FOR MINIMAL COMPETENCY MEASUREMENT

Questions to be Discussed

Would a structure of specifications similar to the NAEP or California examples (see attached) be practical for creating a central bank of competency instruments?

Would such a structure be useful for state departments and local districts?

What other structures or specifications might be practical in creating a central bank and useful for states and local districts?

What processes could be used to assure state and local district involvement during the development of specifications?

THE HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION*

Richard L. Stiles, Consultant
California State Department of Education

During the 1975-76 school year, the California State Department of Education implemented the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) program, pursuant to legislative mandate (Section 12603 of the California Education Code). The code allows any person who is 16- or 17-years old on the date of the test and who has not graduated from high school to apply for the examination. Those passing the examination are awarded a "Certificate of Proficiency" by the State Board of Education.

The certificate is legally equivalent to a high school diploma, except that those certificate holders who have not regularly graduated from high school will have to submit verified parental approval in order to leave school before reaching age 18. The certificate should be honored, in other words, wherever a high school diploma is required; for example - for admission into California's community colleges. The certificate, however, does not necessarily suffice for a transcript of courses completed nor for performance scores on standardized aptitude or survey achievement tests (SAT, ACT, CEEB, GED, and so on), both of which are often required for college or university admission into trade school. Persons contemplating leaving secondary education are urged to seek advice from informed sources regarding their career and occupational plans.

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* A paper presented at the Third Annual Conference and Exhibition on Measurement and Evaluation, Los Angeles, March 18, 1976.

Item Development

The Legislation establishing the CHSPE intended that the CHSPE test basic educational skills, not those skills typically measured by survey achievement test batteries. The examination uses pencil-and-paper applied performance items, rather than items intended to be generally predictive of academic performance. In developing the examination, items were sought from several sources (National Assessment of Educational Progress, Adult Performance Level Study, SCORE, Wisconsin Test of Adult Basic Education, New York State Basic Competency Tests, local district developed tests, and California State Assessment item pools).

Test Content

Approximately 300 items from the item sources listed above were selected early in 1975 for field testing. These items were either kept in their original forms or modified to fit the intents of the proficiency examination. The Department of Education held several item screeing and selection meetings throughout the state, using the above item sources for reference. A process by content matrix was developed for categorization of items to be field tested. The process areas were reading, writing, computing, problem solving, and knowledge recall. The content areas were language arts, mathematics, career/occupational development, consumer skills, health maintenance, community resources, and social and natural sciences, (See Tables I and II).

Although several classifications or dimensions could have been employed to develop the test (e.g. taxonomic domain and level, subject area, stimulus mode of presentation, response mode required, and so on), the process by content matrix approach seemed amenable to the purposes of item development and dissemination of CHSPE contents. Table I graphically presents the matrix, whereas Table II lists the various subskills measured in each of the cells of the matrix. The subskills listed are an attempt to explicate a little further what the CHSPE measures. Notwithstanding this caveat, what is measured on future forms of the CHSPE probably will not change generically.

Field Testing

In May, 1975, about 2,500 high school pupils from 25 secondary schools were included in the field testing - 1,600+ regular high school seniors and 800+ continuation students. An informal sampling procedure was adopted that would reflect the various student demographic (ethnic and socio-economic, for example) characteristics in California. To verify representativeness of the sample, Iowa Tests of Educational Development results from the sample schools for the 1973-74 California State Testing Program were retrieved and summarized. A surprisingly close fit, albeit informal sampling procedures were used, was found between the sample means and the state means. Cumulative normal probabilities for the sample yielded percentiles of 56.7 for reading, 55.6 for language, 53.2 for spelling, and 52.0 for mathematics, compared to a state norm of 50.0. Similarly, sample variance indices were near identical to those found throughout the state.

Eight forms of the field test were constructed, each containing 30 to 40 different items. The field testing was then implemented in a matrix fashion with the 25 schools (that is, each school administered all eight forms of the test, but any one pupil responded to only one form). Summary statistics of this testing appear in Table III. The data predictably showed consistently higher scores for pupils from regular high schools than for pupils from continuation high schools. Internal consistency indices (Hoyt R) were quite acceptable, especially when considering that about one-half of these items were to be discarded later for reasons of inappropriateness or inconsistency. Therefore, the internal consistency indices of the items actually used in the first administration of the examination should be appreciably higher than those found in Table III. The obtained standard error of measurement was quite consistent from form to form and among pupil groups (total, regular, and continuation).

After field testing, items were again acreened and edited to prepare them for final draft copy. The Department of Education screened the field tested items for cultural bias and for inconsistent formating. Local school district level representatives also screened the items for formating and bias. In addition, they rated each item for content acceptability. Through the field testing and subsequent item analyses, item characteristics were computed and used further to screen and edit items for inclusion in the first examination. Generally, items with biserial correlations greater than .50 were considered for the exam. In a few instances, however, items with less than a .50 correlation were included if the concept measured was deemed valuable and the faultiness of the item was correctible. Item characteristics were used to screen the item distractors to make sure they were operating properly.

Distractors not having a negative biserial correlation were screened and were then modified or deleted, as were distractors that were not responded to in the field testing. To complete the process, all selected items were given a final edit before submitting them for additional screening and publication by the contracted test publsher, Educational Testing Service.

One hundred forty-five multiple choice and five essay or form completion items were chosen for the core exams (that is, items actually scored and used to determine who would pass) on each of the first two administrations of the CHSPE (December, 1975 and March, 1976). Four different test versions were developed for the first administration of the exam by including fifty different experimental items in each version -- three versions were developed for the March administration. The 350 experimental items included in the first two administrations of CHSPE were similar to the content areas and processes measured on the core exams.

Criterion Score

Data from the May, 1975, field testing (See Table III) were used to determine a passing score on the December, 1975, administration of the CHSPE. Common items from the December administration were used to equate the March test with the December test. In addition, items from the 1975-76 California Assessment Program, twelfth grade battery were included on each administration of the exam and scores were equated to the statewide assessment results. This process provided a pool of equated items calibrated to a normalized and standardized level of difficulty (Δ) from which future exams could be developed. Using the same process, future items developed could be included experimentally on future editions of the CHSPE and equated to the item pool.

TEST RESULTS - DECEMBER TESTING

Of the 670,000 persons eligible to take the CHSPE in December, 1975, more than 12,000 took the exam and 45 percent of them passed it. From the preliminary item analysis, those items having a negative biserial correlation with the total score on the multiple choice section were deleted from the actual scoring process, as were items that did not add appreciably to establishing a passing score.

The non-multiple choice questions were scored only in those cases where the score earned from the multiple choice items was not high enough to pass, but high enough to pass if full point value or less were earned on the non-multiple choice items. About one-third of the test takers passed on the basis of scores earned on the multiple choice questions alone. Non-multiple choice questions were scored for roughly one-fifth of the test takers, and one-half of them passed as a result of this scoring.

On the first administration of the CHSPE, the average item had a p-value of 75 percent, the average item discrimination yielded a biserial correlation of 0.45, and reliability (internal consistency) of the test was 0.94 (K-R 20 correlation).

Summary

The California High School Proficiency Examination was a legislatively mandated voluntary test (Section 12603 of the California Education Code) that could be taken only by persons 16- or 17-years old who had not graduated from high school and had not previously passed the CHSPE. Any eligible person wishing to take the CHSPE had to submit a registration form and $10 fee to Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Berkeley, California. The exam was to be administered twice annually, once in the fall and again in spring.

Persons passing the CHSPE received a Certificate of Proficiency, the legal equivalent of a high school diploma, from the State Board of Education. However, certificate holders that had not graduated regularly from high school had to obtain verified parental permission if they wished to leave school before reaching age 18.

The examination contained 200 items; 195 multiple choice and five essay or form completion items. Approximately four hours were allowed to complete the exam. The passing score was determined by the characteristics of the items (item difficulty) contained in the examination. Item difficulty

was calculated from the performance of typical graduating seniors in the State of California.

More than 12,000 persons (approximately 670,000 eligible) took the first administration (December, 1975) of the CHSPE: 45 percent of them passed it. About 18,500 took the examination in March, 1976.

TABLE I

Process by Content Specification Matrix

	1 Language Arts	2 Math	3 Occupational Knowledge	4 Consumer Skills	5 Health Maintenance	6 Social Sci.	7 Community Resources	8 Natural Sci.
READING A								
WRITING B								
COMPUTATION MATH C								
KNOWLEDGE D								
PROBLEM SOLVING E								

TABLE II

Subskills Measured by CHSPE

A. 1. Reading/Language Arts

1. Can use a dictionary
2. Can comprehend a sentence
3. Can comprehend a newspaper article
4. Can alphabetize
5. Can comprehend a paragraph
6. Can use an index

A. 2. Reading/Mathematics

1. Can interpret words representing numbers
2. Can indentify the ordinal positions of a number (given a scale or group of numbers)
3. Can identify geometric shapes by words representing geometric shapes
4. Can interpret measurement scales

A. 3. Reading/Career and Occupational Development

1. Can interpret an employment poster
2. Can interpret an employment advertisement
3. Can interpret a job specification sheet
4. Can interpret a personnel performance rating sheet
5. Can interpret an occupational graph of professions

A. 4. Reading/Consumer Skills

1. Can interpret an advertisment
2. Can interpret a retail product poster
3. Can understand a product label (including amount, contents and instructions for product use)
4. Can interpret a bill of charges or invoice
5. Can interpret consumer articles in a newspaper or magazine
6. Can interpret performance graphs (e.g. product, personnel, ect.)
7. Can interpret consumer charts related to goods and services
8. Can interpret a recipe
9. Can interpret an insurance policy

A. 5. Reading/Health Maintenance

1. Can comprehend a passage or article about health maintenance
2. Can interpret a drug prescription label
3. Can interpret product label (especially product use and misuse warnings)
4. Can interpret health and nutritional charts
5. Can understand First Aid procedures

A. 6. Reading/Social Science

1. Can understand passage from social science literature
2. Can interpret a voter ballot
3. Can interpret a map (directions, elevation, boundaries ect.)
4. Can distinguish between fact and opinion
5. Can understand common legal forms
6. Can interpret a traffic ticket
7. Can interpret a diagram of an automobile accident
8. Can interpret information about required permits
9. Can interpret a rule or ordinance
10. Can comprehend newspaper current events article

A. 7. Reading/Community Resources

1. Can interpret á road map
2. Can interpret road signs
3. Can interpret community resources advertisments and information
4. Can interpret directories
5. Can interpret memberships (clubs, unions, associations ect.) requirements

A. 8. Reading/Natural Science

1. Can understand an article or passage from natural science literature
2. Can interpret scientific graphs and figures

****

B. 1. Writing/Language Arts

1. Can write a complete thought
2. Can write a sentence
3. Can punctuate & capitalize a sentence
4. Can write social correspondence
5. Can identify sentence order within a paragraph
6. Can write a paragraph
7. Can address an envelope
8. Can indentify the main thought of a paragraph

B. 2. Writing/Mathematics

1. Can convert words representing numbers into numbers
2. Can convert numbers into words representing numbers
3. Can write proper fractions, decimals, and percents.
4. Can convert numbers from one form to another form (e.g. whole, and mixed numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents)

B. 3. Writing/Career and Occupational Development

1. Can write a letter of application for a job
2. Can identify the basic components of a business letter and their location on a page)
3. Can write a basic business letter
4. Can complete a job application form and other related forms
5. Can write a want ad

B. 4. Writing/Consumer Skills

1. Can fill out common forms (e.g. tax, credit, insurance ect.)
2. Can fill out banking forms (e.g. checks, deposit slips ect,)
3. Can write consumer letters (e.g. order, products, requesting information making reservations, ect.)

B. 5. Writing/Health Maintenance

1. Can write a paragraph on an aspect of health maintenance

B. 6. Writing/Social Science

1. Can write a paragraph stating position on a social issue

B. 7. Writing/Community Resources

1. Can write a letter in inquiry
2. Can write directions to get from one location to another

B. 8. Writing/Natural Science

1. Can write a paragraph on an ecological issue

****

C. 1. Computation/Language Arts

C. 2. Computation/Mathematics

1. Can add, subtract, multiply and divide:

   whole numbers
   fractions
   decimals
   percentages
   combinations of the four above
   measures of weight
   measures of speed
   measures of volume
   measures to time
   measures of length
   measures of money
   measures of temperature
   metric numbers
2. Can do numeric conversions (eg.g decimals to fractions)
3. Can do measurement conversions (e.g. pounds into ounces, yards into metres)
4. Can compute the area for basic geometric shapes
5. Can compute the perimeter for basic geometric shapes
6. Can compute the volume for basic geometric figures

C.3. Computations/Career and Occupational Development

1. Can use mathematical operations to answer questions related to financial income
2. Can use mathematical operations to answer questions related to income and time worked

C.4 Computation/Consumer Skills

1. Can do basic consumer banking skills (e.g. compute interest, compute a checkbook balance, etc.)
2. Can compute to solve relationships found in a chart comparing products, tax dollars expended, production, service demands, ect.
3. Can compute cost and weight or amount differences among products
4. Can apply the subskills listed in C.2. (Computation/Mathematics) to consumer context
5. Can compute taxes (federal, state, local, etc.)
6. Can compute from an advertisement

C.5. Computation/Health Maintenance

1. Can compute data found on nutritional charts
2. Can compute data found on medicine labels or in directions for product use
3. Can compute data found on disease or death charts

C.6. Computations/Social Science

1. Can apply the subskills listed in C.2. (Computations/Mathematics) to a social science context

C.7. Computation/Community Resources

1. Can compute distance and elevation from a map
2. Can apply the subskills listed in C.2. (Computation/Mathematics) to a community resource context
3. Can apply subskills listed in E.2.2. to community resources

C.8. Computation/Natural Science

1. Can apply the subskills listed in C.2. (Computation/Mathematics) to a natural science context

****

D.1. Knowledge/Language Arts

D.2. Knowledge/Mathematics

1. Can apply rules of rounding
2. Can apply basic mathematical terms

D. 3. Knowledge/Career and Occupational Developement

1. Can identify appropriate agencies; personnel, resources for a situation given that the functions of the agencies are described.
2. Can apply common terms used in personnel work or payroll

D. 4 Knowledge/Consumer Skills

1. Can apply rules and laws about credit and banking to a given situation
2. Can apply common terms used used in insurance and banking
3. Can apply common terms in home economics
4. Can apply common terms used in advertisements as applied to consumer skills

D. 5 Knowledge/Health Maintenance

1. Can apply common terms used in health safety and nutrition

D. 6 Knowledge/Social Science

1. Can apply common terms used in Civics
2. Can identify basic facts about the structure of government

D. 7. Knowledge/Community Resources

1. Can apply rules of traffic safety

D. 8. Knowledge/Natural Science

1. Can apply basic facts used in the natural science

****

E. 1. Problem Solving/Language Arts

E. 2. Problem Solving/Mathematics

1. Can use various neasurement processes to solve problems (e.g time and distance)
2. Can apply mathematical concepts to solve reading problems

E. 3. Problem Solving/ Career and Occupational Development

1. Can determine from personnel data (interests, abilities, etc.) the best occupational direction to pursue.

E. 4. Problem Solving/Consumer Skills

1. Can use graphics to solve consumer problems

E. 5. Problem Solving/Health Maintenance

1. Can apply at a practical level, safety, health and/or nutrition information to solve health maintenance.

E. 6. Problem Solving/Social Science

1. Can use graphs to solve social science problems

E. 7. Problem Solving/Community Resources

1. Can apply information given in transportation time schedules

E. 8. Problem Solving/Natural Science

1. Can use basic scientific knowledge to solve a given problem

TABLE III

SUMMARY STATISTICS ON FIELD TEST OF PROFICIENCY TEST

EIGHT FORMS

May, 1975

FORM NO.	NO. OF ITEMS	GROUP	NO. OF PUPILS	MEAN	MEAN DIFFERENCE REGULAR-CONTINUATION	STANDARD DEVIATION	t VALUE*	HOYT R	STANDARD ERROR
I	38	Total	315	19.20	4.10	5.07	7.050	.78	2.32
		Reg.	208	20.60		4.47		.74	2.26
		Cont.	107	16.50		5.09		.77	2.41
II	34	Total	336	21.14	5.43	6.22	8.077	.85	2.34
		Reg.	215	23.09		5.31		.81	2.26
		Cont.	121	17.66		6.23		.84	2.44
III	34	Total	324	22.60	5.03	5.55	8.308	.84	2.21
		Reg.	209	24.38		4.75		.79	2.12
		Cont.	115	19.35		5.46		.81	2.34
IV	37	Total	309	23.92	5.72	6.35	7.658	.86	2.34
		Reg.	201	25.99		4.93		.79	2.22
		Cont.	108	20.27		6.87		.87	2.48
V	32	Total	313	19.50	4.62	5.33	7.485	.80	2.33
		Reg.	213	20.98		4.69		.76	2.26
		Cont.	100	16.36		5.27		.78	2.46
VI	32	Total	319	17.31	2.86	4.40	5.638	.70	2.37
		Reg.	211	18.28		4.08		.66	2.33
		Cont.	108	15.42		4.39		.68	2.43
VII	32	Total	316	20.85	5.26	5.50	8.605	.82	2.27
		Reg.	211	22.60		4.71		.78	2.19
		Cont.	105	17.34		5.31		.79	2.40
VIII	31	Total	305	22.76	5.31	5.62	7.923	.86	2.04
		Reg.	202	24.55		4.46		.81	1.92
		Cont.	103	19.24		6.01		.86	2.23

* Independent t ratio between regular and continuation high school pupil performance where $t = 3.291$ for $p < .0005$

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

EXAMPLE OF POSSIBLE SPECIFICATIONS

PROCESS LEVELS	SUBJECT AREAS						
	CAREER	CITIZENSHIP	COMMUNITY RESOURCE	CONSUMER	HUMANITIES (ART, MUSIC, LITERATURE)	MATH	SCIENCE
KNOWLEDGE							
*COMPREHENSION (READING LISTENING)							
*APPLICATION (WRITING COMPUTATION)							
*ANALYSIS & EVALUATION							
VALUING							

*PROBLEM SOLVING

PROCESS LEVELS

SUBJECT AREA TOPICS

CAREER

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS	JOB CHARACTERISTICS	CAREER DECISIONS	GENERALIZABLE SKILLS	CAREER SUCCESS FACTORS

TOPIC HEADINGS

GENERALIZABLE SKILLS

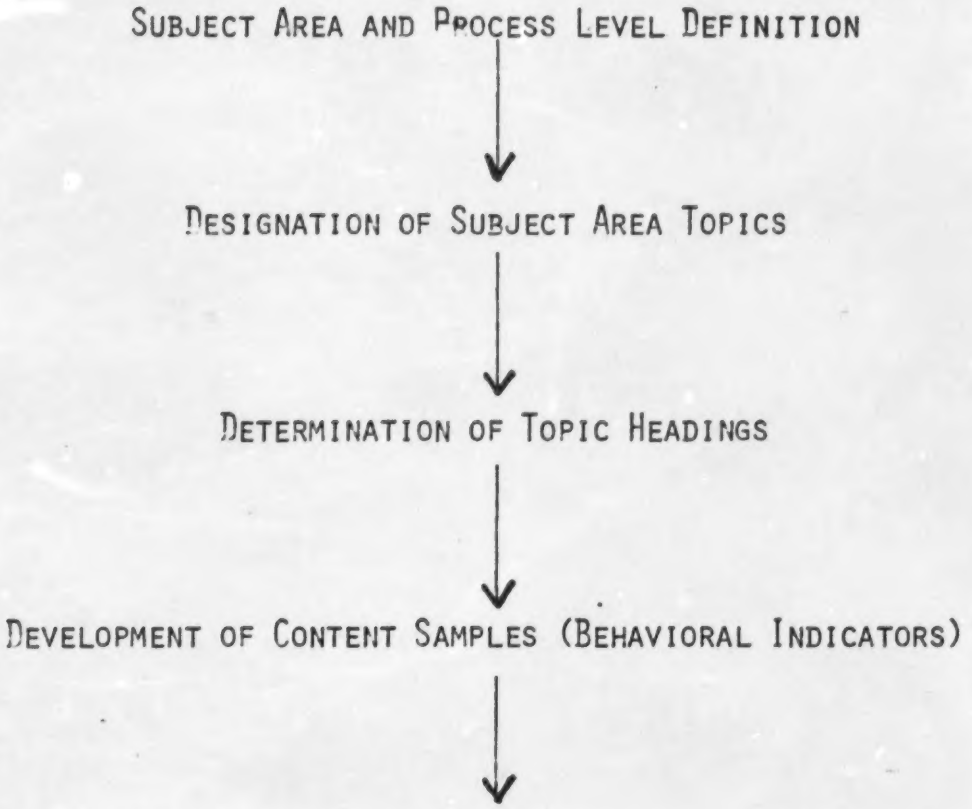
NUMERICAL SKILLS	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	MANUAL PERCEPTION SKILLS	INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS	INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	EMPLOYMENT SEEKING SKILLS

PROCESS LEVELS	CONTENT SAMPLES
	EMPLOYMENT SEEKING SKILLS
KNOWLEDGE	KNOW WHERE TO SEEK FULL AND PART TIME EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (E.G., STATE EMPLOYMENT OFFICES, COLLEGE PLACEMENT OFFICES, PRIVATE PLACEMENT AGENCIES, PERSONNEL DEPARTMENTS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, NEWSPAPER WANT ADS, PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS.
COMPREHENSION	IS ABLE TO READ AND INTERPRET VARIOUS JOB WANTED ADS
APPLICATION	IS ABLE TO FILL OUT JOB APPLICATION FORMS COMPLETELY, ACCURATELY AND NEATLY; CAN WRITE LETTERS OF APPLICATION AND PREPARE BACKGROUND RESUMES
EVALUATION	IS ABLE TO ASSESS A SPECIFIC JOB OR POSITION IN TERMS OF CURRENT INTERESTS AND VALUES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE JOB WILL PROVIDE SELF-SATISFACTION, MEET INDIVIDUAL SPECIFICATIONS, AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARD REACHING CAREER GOALS.
VALUING	RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING HOW TO PREPARE FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

(SOME PEOPLE MAY FEEL THAT THE CONTENT SAMPLES ARE NOT SPECIFIC ENOUGH FOR EXERCISE WRITERS AND MAY DESIRE MORE DETAILED STATEMENTS AT EACH PROCESS LEVEL.)

STAGES IN SPECIFICATIONS


Subject Area and Process Level Definition
Designation of Subject Area Topics
Determination of Topic Headings
Development of Content Samples (Behavioral Indicators)
Collection and Development of Exercises.

PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFICATION DEVELOPMENT

Subject Area and Process Level Definition

Development and Review -- Representatives from State Departments and Local Districts
-- NAEP Staff Members

Determination of Topics, Topic Headings, Content Samples

Development -- Review of basic competency specifications (objectives)
-- Rough draft of specifications by NAEP staff with advise from subject matter specialists

Review -- Representatives from state departments and local districts

QUESTIONS TO BE COVERED DURING DISCUSSION OF SPECIFICATIONS

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS YOU WISH FOR QUESTIONS A-D (USE THE BACK OF SHEET IF NECESSARY). WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR REPLY TO QUESTIONS E AND F.

A. WOULD A STRUCTURE OF SPECIFICATIONS SIMILAR TO THE NAEP OR CALIFORNIA EXAMPLES BE PRACTICAL FOR CREATING A CENTRAL BANK OF COMPETENCY INSTRUMENTS?

B. WOULD SUCH A STRUCTURE BE USEFUL FOR STATE DEPARTMENTS AND LOCAL DISTRICTS?

C. WHAT OTHER STRUCTURES OR SPECIFICATIONS MIGHT BE PRACTICAL IN CREATING A CENTRAL BANK AND USEFUL FOR STATES AND LOCAL DISTRICTS?

D. WHAT PROCESSES COULD BE USED TO ASSURE STATE AND LOCAL DISTRICT INVOLVEMENT DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFICATIONS?

E. DO YOU HAVE MATERIALS THAT MIGHT HELP US IN DEVELOPING SPECIFICATIONS (E.G., SETS OF GOALS OR OBJECTIVES RELATED TO BASIC COMPETENCY)?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

F. DO YOU KNOW OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT USE MATERIALS THAT WOULD BE VALUABLE IN DEVELOPING SPECIFICATIONS?

- ☐ YES
- ☐ NO

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

OFFICE PHONE _____

GROUP 2

ITEM CHARACTERISTICS -- CRITERION GROUPS

Discussion Guide

Standard NAEP data consists of:

-- Proportion of responses to each foil or scoring category (P-value) for:

- National
- Sex: Male, Female
- Race: White, Black, Other
- Size and Type of Community: Extreme Rural, Low Metro Small Place, Medium City, Main Big City, Urban Fringe, High Metro
- Parental Education: No High School, Some High School, Graduated from High School, Post High School
- Region: Northeast, Southeast, Central, West

-- Standard errors for P-values

What aspects of standard NAEP data are most relevant for selecting items from a large pool and for scoring tests made up of such items?

What other item data are needed?

What is the role of item statistics and reliability and validity measures when sampling from a large item pool?

Can criterion groups be identified that can be accepted by state and local users? (e.g., successful first year junior college students (θ_1) versus unsuccessful first year junior college students (θ_2).

If a criterion group can be identified, then the responses to any set of items drawn from an item pool containing P-values for θ_1 and θ_2 can be scored in a way that will yield probability statements for each examinee related to the criterion group (e.g., Jim Smith's responses indicate he is a θ_1 with a probability of .95).

Would such probability statements be an improvement over current practice of setting arbitrary total score criterion levels?

GROUP 3

SECURITY CONCERNS RELATED TO THE GENERATION AND USE OF A NATIONAL POOL OF TEST ITEMS OF BASIC COMPETENCY

The purpose of this session is to explore and to discuss the need to develop cooperative agreements to maintain the security of item pools and resultant tests to be used for certifying student competency in "applied basic skills."

Expressed concerns for security seem to stem from two general considerations. The first relates to the special applications of these tests and to the potential consequences to students taking them. If such tests are to be used as a primary criteria for graduation eligibility, considerable motivation will exist for students to illicitly obtain and distribute copies of the tests. Recognizing this potential for abuse, the local or state agency which develops its own tests will most likely take whatever steps are necessary to maintain security. This situation becomes more complicated, however, when the item pool is to be developed through cooperative arrangements of local state and other agencies who in turn want to draw upon the item pool for their own purposes. Certainly under these condictions, more persons would be familiar with the item pool or portions of it, thus increasing opportunities for exposure. In addition, to the extent that the several participating agencies have different testing purposes in mind, they may also have varying needs and motivations to keep tests and test items secure. In part, the potential problems of security may be dramitized by two questions: If your agency already has developed relevant test materials, under what security agreements would you be willing to contribute then to a "pool" to be used by others? Or, as a potential user of the pool, what restrictions would you recommend to govern the use of the pool by yourself and by others?

The following outline is offered as a guide to further exploration of security concerns. You are encouraged to bring up for discussion any additional throughts or recommendations you may have.

I. Security concerns related to the development of an item pool

A. Are there legal or copyright restrictions that prevent you or others from contributing to a national pool of pertinent items?

B. Are there state or local school restrictions or requirements limiting use of your materials by others?

C. Other concerns and suggestions.

II. Security concerns related to the maintenance and review of an item pool

A. Logistically, where should such a pool be maintained? Single location? Multiple locations?

B. Who should be authorized to have access to the pool for review purposes?

C. What suggestions do you have for facilitating access to the pool while minimizing unnecessary exposure?

D. Other concerns and suggestions.

III. Security concerns related to the use of the pool

A. As a user, will it be necessary for your agency to involve other school personnel and perhaps even citizen groups in the item selection process?

B. If yes, can you suggest any procedures which might minimize security concerns?

C. What suggestions can you offer concerning the administration of the tests that would assure adequate security?

D. Do you foresee a need to "sacrifice" certain test items to illustrate the nature of the test to the press, the community or to other school personnel?

E. Other concerns and suggestions.